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SUBJECT: SUDANESE INTELLIGENCE CHIEF SAYS GOS READY TO WORK
WITH THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION ON DARFUR

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Chief Salah Ghosh said that the Government of Sudan (GoS) is ready to cooperate with the new US administration, particularly on the Darfur crisis. He suggested that a definitive solution to Darfur is near and could be an "early victory" for the new administration. Ghosh explained that the intimate involvement of the US in solving the crisis is "essential." He asked that the new administration be "patient" with the GoS as it tries to make positive progress on the ground in Darfur to solve the crisis "step by step", in a "civilized" manner. Ghosh claimed that the GoS is trying to make positive strides in Darfur ahead of the likely ICC indictment of GoS President Omar Al-Bashir, but vowed that "the regime will survive" even if an indictment is handed down sooner rather than later, and will continue to try to make progress on Darfur and CPA, regardless of the ICC. Ghosh also used the opportunity to express the regime's frustration over US support for Israel during the Gaza conflict. He warned that the USG's actions will calamitously increase support for violent extremism and pushing Hamas into an alliance with Iran. End Summary.

USG-GoS COOPERATION UNDER A NEW USG ADMINISTRATION

12. (C) CDA Fernandez met with Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Chief Salah Ghosh on 11 January to discuss how the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the USG might cooperate to ensure implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and progress toward a solution to the crisis in Darfur. CDA told Ghosh that the US wants to see the GoS make concrete progress on the ground in Darfur, pointing out that early progress on Darfur is "better for the regime" ahead of a likely ICC indictment of GoS President Omar Al-Bashir, rather than after.

13. (C) "We believe we can have a good relationship" with the incoming US administration, responded Ghosh. We are not "enemies," he said, "we are only playing a game of politics against one another." We must look at our concerns, sit down and negotiate; "we are open to anything," he continued. We believe that there is a "lack of knowledge" in the new administration about us, and we would like the opportunity to "present ourselves" to the new administration," said the NISS Chief. He added that the US wanted to curb "uncivilized

behavior" in Sudan and was right to do so, "we need to behave better".

US HAS AN "ESSENTIAL" ROLE TO PLAY IN SOLVING DARFUR

¶4. (C) If the new administration has a real interest in solving Darfur, we can work with them on it to achieve a "great early success," said Ghosh. "The CPA is a great success, and we believe the same can be done for Darfur," he said. The spy chief explained that the GoS is committed to what was agreed to on Darfur, but never signed, during USG-GoS negotiations with Special Envoy Williamson in May ¶2008. Sudan has been implementing much of that agreement even though the American side did not reciprocate. "Williamson could have solved Darfur," he noted, "but his personal ambition was greater than his interest in solving problems." Ghosh claimed that the regime "does not care" about an ICC arrest warrant of Al-Bashir, and is instead more concerned with making positive progress on the ground to solve the Darfur crisis. We should work now to achieve progress before the ICC decision is announced, but "we will survive" even when the ICC decision is made, Ghosh stated with confidence bordering on arrogance. "We know there are certain problems in Darfur which must be solved, such as disarmament of the janjaweed," said Ghosh, "but the GoS currently lacks the capacity to do this." We freely admit that they are a problem, he noted (Note: Janjaweed occasionally turned their weapons on the GoS in 2008 and frequently fought each other over land and water, leading to the loss of hundreds of lives among Darfur's Arab tribes in 2007-2008. End note).

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¶5. (C) A new USG administration must "be patient with us" as we try to solve this crisis "step by step, in a civilized manner," said Ghosh. "There is a chance for the new US administration to help solve Darfur, and we are ready to work with them on it," he stated. Ghosh expressed the regime's concern that the new administration is highly subject to the pressure of lobby groups and the media. If the administration puts its national interests first, those of political stability, peace and cooperation, then it will reach an early solution to the Darfur crisis, he claimed. "We believe that without the involvement of the US, Darfur cannot be solved," said the NISS director. The US is the guarantor of North/South peace in Sudan, and it has an "essential" role to play in solving Darfur, as well. "We hope that the incoming administration will exercise its role positively to end the conflict," concluded Ghosh.

ANGER OVER US SUPPORT OF ISRAEL

¶6. (C) Ghosh took the opportunity to voice his anger about Israel's raid on Gaza and US support for Israel to CDA Fernandez. Your flawed policies are pushing Hamas to ally needlessly to Iran, said Ghosh. "There is no military solution to Gaza," he asserted. "You must recognize that Hamas is the elected power in Gaza; don't push them to the extreme," he warned. He added that Gaza was further inflaming Muslim youth against the US, much like Iraq did, and this anger could spawn more anti-American terrorism regionally. He added that more people have died in Gaza in a month than Darfur in a year (Note: That is not exactly true as the number of wounded in Gaza seems higher. The cases are not at all analogous because Darfur is violence from the regime against its own people, and also the population of Darfur is much larger than that of Gaza. End note).

COMMENT

¶7. (C) While the wily Ghosh claims the NCP regime is open and ready to cooperate fully with the incoming US administration, particularly on the issue of Darfur, in

reality it is probably more concerned about what a lack of cooperation with the US could lead to in the uncharted foreign policy waters of the Obama Presidency. Regardless of its motives, the regime clearly believes that US involvement will be essential to resolving the Darfur crisis and is always eager for a "deal" where its skills of deception and delay can be maximized. Even after the ICC's announcement (currently anticipated for the end of January or beginning of February) the regime will be eager for signs of engagement from the new US administration, which may help ensure a tempered GoS response to the ICC while waiting to see what will be the direction of US policy toward Sudan. As usual, the NCP regime would like to engage with the US on Darfur (and continue to engage on the CPA), promise much but deliver as little as possible, but will look for concessions in return. Ghosh's admission of the "janjaweed problem" was interesting in that it confirms that these forces are often a law unto themselves, changing sides, fighting each other, and constantly upping the ante with the regime, threatening to ally themselves with the Darfuri rebels if the price is right.

FERNANDEZ